

Civil War Rifle & Sword Found in Old Barn

By Rusty Edwards



In 2011, a man and his daughter discovered this U.S. Model 1863 Springfield Rifle-Musket and NCO Sword in the rafters of an old, dilapidated barn on the Maryland Eastern Shore. The owner of the barn invited the couple to search the structure for anything of value before it was torn down and the land cleared for new housing.

The old barn was in very bad shape. The entrance was totally overgrown with brush, and it took considerable effort to gain entrance. Once inside, the man and his daughter searched the loft and found a Model 1840 Noncommissioned Officers Sword and scabbard wrapped in an old blanket placed in the rafters. This type of sword was typically carried by Union Army sergeants to denote their rank and status as noncommissioned officers. Nearby, they discovered a U.S. Model 1863 Springfield Rifle-Musket, also wrapped in an old blanket. I believe both items were likely placed in the barn's rafters by a soldier at the end of the Civil War.



Heavy overgrowth blocked access to the barn.



*Union Sergeant with same
type of rifle & sword.*

Union soldiers from this part of Maryland were assigned to the 1st Regiment Eastern Shore Infantry, the Army of the Potomac. Since the Springfield lock is marked 1864, I focused on the engagements of this regiment from 1864 until the war's end in 1865. I found this unit saw action during the Battle of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, the "Bloody Angle," Cold Harbor, the Siege of Petersburg, the Battle of the Crater near Petersburg, Five Forks, the Pursuit of Robert E. Lee, and his surrender at Appomattox Court House.